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Night

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It's late, and in the air there is the electric scent
of coming rain. I walk slowly towards the gate
with the woman to whose children I read the story
of Snow White, a foolish girl who tasted death

three times. The children's other two choices had been
renditions of Rapunzel, and the familiar story in my fading voice
had coaxed them to sleep like the prick of a finger
on a spinning-wheel, lowering them gently, quietly

into the shallows. And after the last story's final words,
that tender happily ever after, I'd shepherded them to bed;
they had stumbled, tousle-haired and hazy-eyed,
through hallways harder than their soft sleep, small mouths stretched

into delicate yawns. I had spent the following almost-silence
in stationary escape, pulling myself through the yielding pages
of a novel heftier than my thoughts, the whispering pages
harmonizing with the patriarchal cabinet towering in the corner,

which counted out my minutes like beans:
payment for a good cow I could not keep,
but would not miss once I had seeds of magic
pressed into my palm. And so when the woman comes home

and we walk outside, into the stirring air
that holds the electric scent of coming rain, I think
of those beans. I go slowly towards the gate,
and I let my heart race deliciously when the restless wind

pushes against my clothes and tugs at my hair, and I
feel the savage capability in the low darkness
of the sky to rend itself wide with flaming light
and survive the torrents it will birth and we will bear.